

JULY 1991

OPEN ARMS

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 7

..... MICHIANA'S LESBIAN NEWSLETTER

Just the Facts

by Penny S. Lorio

One of the most brilliant women I have known was the coach of my softball team. Her brilliance shone not because she could recite Shakespeare or interpret Vonnegut, or because she could explain the principles of Astro-physics in layman's terms. No, hers was quiet brilliance. She could manage a diverse, competitive group of women for an entire summer and keep them from pulling out each other's hair.

In addition to the obvious tasks of figuring the lineup, batting averages, RBI's and errors, this woman had to contend with break-ups and make-ups, affairs, crushes and P.M.S.

I'll bet that in the entire history of the L.A. Dodgers, there has never been a day when the third baseman wasn't speaking to the catcher because the pitcher told the left fielder that the shortstop -- (current steady of the third baseman), made a pass at the catcher and the right fielder saw it.

Softball is different. It's the second lesbian national pastime. Falling in love is the first national pastime, and the two blend into a kind of erotic athleticism with more plot than a soap opera.

Each spring we'd emerge from hibernation and assemble for the first practice. While we were busy running laps, loosening our arms and taking practice swings, the coach would be hunched over her notebook in a state of quiet meditation; analyzing, planning her strategy, and praying.

In the course of human events it is impossible to collect a group of lesbians for a softball team without a tangle of intimate histories. Records were kept. Who's dating. Who was dating. Who wants to date whom. Those statistics could prove more valuable than any others before the season was over.

Regardless of shape, size, attitude or talent, the coach knew immediately to what capacity a player could benefit the team. There was the "fashion mogul" -- the woman who would set the note for team fashion. The coach was also quick to recognize the "real jocks" and "jock-wannabe's". Then the coach explained to us how to play the field, how to get to first base, what to do when you struck out; then we talked a little bit about softball, too.



By mid-season our records was: six wins, zero losses, one break-up and three known liaisons. Lines had been drawn and sides were chosen. Tempers were thin and nerves stretched tight like strings on a violin. The coach knew at this point, we were our most dangerous opponent. We'd proven we could match any team on the field, but would we beat ourselves?

It was the championship game. Bits of conversation from around the bench sounded like the cackle of chickens clustered in the barnyard:

"Who has the bats?"

"If she thinks I'm going to stand in right field and pick my nose all night, she's got another think coming..."

"She was just looking over here. Don't turn around! Wait until I tell you it's.... Forget it. She saw you looking at her."

"...did anybody remember the bats?"

"Damn this wind. I should have used more mousse--"

"They're split up. She even took the dog."

"I can't help it. She's got great legs."

"...she's just showing off. She'd slide into first base just to get style points."

"Where are the damn bats!?"

Rising above this cloud of confusion was the coach. She would somehow locate the bats, bandage a bruised ego while stressing the importance of hitting the cut-off and melt twelve realities into one mission: winning the game.

It was the bottom of the seventh inning. We had one last chance to capture the coveted trophy and earn the right to call ourselves the best, but we needed to score two runs. The bases were loaded. There were two outs. Coach called a time-out and gathered the entire team together. This was the time to send our best pinch hitter to the plate. We all knew the strategy but we waited breathlessly to hear it from her lips.

"This is the thirteenth game of our season, but right now it's the only one that counts. I'm putting in a pinch-hitter. Be ready."

The woman she selected to pinch-hit had a batting average that was a negative number. She hadn't gotten more than two hits the entire season. Why would she possibly be chosen to bat in a crisis situation? We were all sure the coach was crazy from the heat. We waited in nervous anticipation as the pitcher delivered the ball.

Continued on Page 3 Page 1

LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP



- July 2 - How to handle stress
- July 9 - What goals do you have for yourself? What would you like to accomplish?
- July 16 - Game night
- July 23 - Bring your favorite poem or story
- July 30 - Discrimination in the womyn's world

Lesbian Support Group meets
every Tuesday at 7 p.m. Ind. time
at the YWCA
802 Lafayette Blvd.
South Bend



VIDEO NIGHT and SATURDAY BRUNCH ARE taking a summer vacation. Look for their reappearance in the fall. Hope you all have a great summer.

AUGUST POTLUCK



If you are able and willing to have the August potluck, contact Nancy O., 233-3481.

Our FEATURED ARTIST this month is JULIE B. She says she studies art daily to be sane and will attend an art institute within the year. Her work is on pages 2, 4, & 5 of this month's issue. Look for her drawings in future Open Arms. NANCY OTT's work is featured on page 6. Thanks again, Nancy.



EDITORIAL POLICY: We may edit any article submitted for length or content. We ask that all articles submitted be signed, but will respect the wishes of the author by not printing the author's name if so requested.

OPEN ARMS DEADLINE/MEETING

The deadline for submissions for the August Open Arms is July 10th. Submissions can be mailed to Open Arms, P.O. Box 845, Mishawaka, IN 46546 or given to Laura, Jeanne or Maggie. Submissions received after July 10th will not be published in the July newsletter.

Newsletter meeting: Wednesday, July 10th at 2121 Hollywood Place, South Bend. 7:00 p.m. Indiana time. Call Jeanne 287-5071 for directions.

THIRD FRIDAY OUT

Spaghetti Works
501 N. Niles Avenue
South Bend

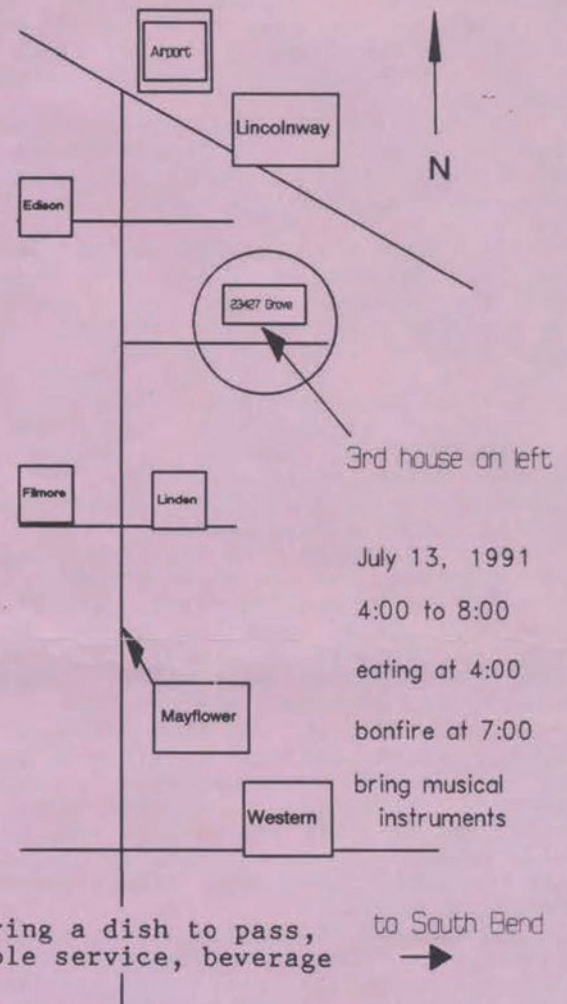
July 19th
7:00 p.m. Ind. time

Call Lu or Sheree for
reservations by
July 17th
(616) 663-8644

*called
NOTRE Dame
glasses
5'7"*

JULY POTLUCK

July 13th
at C. and B.'s
23427 Grove
South Bend



Directions to C & B's house

POLITICALLY CORRECT LESBIAN DRESSING 101 (or Bloomington Revisited)

It seems hard to believe that 19 years have passed since I first went to the Bloomington Campus, and spent my first semester in Read Dorm. A lot has changed, but alot has remained the same. I guess the most changes have been in myself. But going to the National Women's Music Festival was a real experience for this festie virgin, alternately lots of fun and pure hell (OK, so maybe it just seemed that hot).

The concerts were for the most part great-hearing familiar and unfamiliar performers, comedians and speakers. The most striking thing about being there, (other than the sweltering dorm rooms which smelled rather funky-I don't remember them smelling that bad during my IU days) was the incredible feeling of the power of all those women (some 3000 or so) gathered together. It was wonderful, and made you wish that every day could be like that. I expected the "high" to last for at least a few days, but reality hit hard when we got home and found out that my friend's garage had been broken into by a few "boys" and a bunch of stuff was stolen.

Geraldine Ferraro was inspiring-mostly for her commitment to work within the system to try and change things. One of the things she mentioned was that women presently comprise 51% of the population-but hold only 2% of the seats in the Senate and 17% in the House. Despite all the crap that she went through in the Presidential campaign, she remains committed to serving the public and is running for the Senate in New York in hopes of making change. I guess many of us think our votes don't count, but the dismal statistics of elected women in the Federal government means that it is really important for all of us to exercise our voting privilege and vote on election days.

One thing I noticed during my cigarette breaks, (It was hard to choose between my nicotine cravings and leaving the rare air-conditioned buildings) was lesbian footwear and dress. It seems that practically everyone had a fanny pack, the norm for footwear was Birkenstocks or tennies, most women wore shorts to stay cool, but there were the occasional wild outfits. So, how do you manage not to get heatstroke in all that leather, complete with chains and handcuffs?

It was great to see so many women walking hand in hand-I could have spent days just watching! We hope to bring some new performers to SB, and possibly the play "Dos Lesbos" which was performed as part of the new drama series, and was a terrific production. All in all, it was good to be back in Bloomington-even with flashbacks from the past. But next year, I'll definitely opt for a nice motel room with air-conditioning.

The woman swung, eyes closed, and sent the ball rolling slowly down the third base line. Our runner on third scampered home as the third baseman fielded the ball. The throw went over the first baseman's head, allowing another run to score. We won the game.

All coaches know that the one predictable element in all this chaos is that nothing's predictable. Everybody loves a winner, but you've gotta take a chance. The difference is that a brilliant coach actually makes the theory reality.

EDITORS NOTE: We welcome Penny S. Lorio to Open Arms. Penny's column is also published in Lavender Morning (Kalamazoo, MI), Gaze Newspaper (Minneapolis, MN) and Gay Chicago.

Her first book, Expenses, has just been published and is available at Pandora's in Kalamazoo. Expenses will also be available in this area at OAK Fest on September 14th and Penny will be there to autograph copies!



SOFTBALL

SOUTH BEND WOMEN'S A LEAGUE SOFTBALL SCHEDULE

TEAMS:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. JEANNIE'S TAVERN | 5. A-1 AIR, INC. |
| 2. HOOSIER TIRE | 6. CROWE CHIZEK |
| 3. BARNABY'S | 7. LIBERTY STEELERS |
| 4. ELKS LODGE | 8. ALL "T.H.U.M.B.S." |

DATE	HOME	VS	VISITORS	TIME	PARK
JULY 12TH	5		7	6:30	BOLAND
	2		4	7:15	"
	6		1	8:30	"
	8		3	7:15	WALKER
JULY 19TH	8		2	6:30	O'BRIEN
	7		3	7:15	"
	4		6	8:30	"
	1		5	7:15	WALKER
JULY 26TH	3		5	6:30	WALKER
	7		1	7:15	"
	4		8	8:30	"
	2		6	6:30	MEMORIAL
AUG 2ND	8		1	6:30	BOLAND
	4		5	7:15	"
	6		7	8:30	"
	2		3	6:30	WALKER

Come out and support your favorite team. (Our own beanie weenie plays for All T.H.U.M.B.S.)

THE SUNDAY BUNCH, whose meeting was announced in the June Open Arms, is an open group of gay men and lesbians who meet monthly for a potluck brunch. The July meeting will be in Niles, MI on the 14th. Call Glenn at (616) 683-8498 for more information.

Something Missing

Womyn*

No one stops to play with me
They act as though I am rooted
like a tree
No expression of life or affection
Faltering smiles spawned of confusion
Little children lost in moments past
The playground noises in my head still last
Favorite toys and stolen dreams
Drift like wild leaves in March
Upon my face I remember
No one stops to play with me

No one stops to talk to me
They act as though my mouth is
clamped tight like a bolted door
Do they really have to keep score
Of all their cute abuses and funny
intrusions
Dancing tongues waggle about lifes
minutes
Tracing thoughts around other
peoples names
Ballerina twirls kept you in my
hand
Until it all broke free Scary eyes
grabbed at my emotions
As it all fell back in my lap
and no one stops to talk to me

No one can accept me
They act as though I am diseased
Viral feelings of societal beings
Watching eyes accusing fingers
Am I so different that you
hate me
So I turn to safety
I run off to my secret place
Dark and small with a big
door and three walls
Scared of it all that is me
I'll hide in the closet with
my sexuality
and no one will know me

- Julie

I'M SPECIAL

I'm special. In all the world there's nobody
like me.

Since the beginning of time, there has never been
another person like me. Nobody has my smile,
Nobody has my eyes, my nose, my hands, my voice.
I'm special.

No one can be found who has my handwriting.

Nobody anywhere has my tastes - for food or music
or art. No one sees things just as I do.

In all of time there's been no one who laughs
like me, no one who cries like me. And what
makes me laugh and cry will never provoke
identical laughter and tears from anybody else,
ever.

No one reacts to any situation just as I would
react. I'm special.

I'm the only one in all of creation who has my
set of abilities. Oh, there will always be
somebody who is better at one of the things I'm
good at, but no one in the universe can reach the
quality of my combinations of talents, ideas,
abilities and feelings. Like a room full of
musical instruments, some may excel alone, but
none can match the symphony sound when all are
played together. I'm a symphony.

Through all of eternity no one will ever look,
talk, walk, think or do like me. I'm, special.
I'm rare.

And in all rarity there is great value.

Because of my great rare value, I need not
attempt to imitate others. I will accept - yes,
celebrate - differences.

Anonymous
(Submitted by Nancy O.)

PUZZLE

The object in solving is to discern a familiar phrase, saying, cliché, or name from each
arrangement of letters and/or symbols. For example, box 1a depicts "once over lightly." Box 1b
shows "gossip column." Sounds easy, but wait until you see the others.

	a	b	c	d	e	f
1	once lightly	g o s s i p	en emy en emy	cap tal	noon good	bathing suit
2	age beauty	strokes strokes strokes	✓ yearly	ses ame	law of return.	e a p s u a l
3	harm on y	encounters encounters encounters	WOMAN campus	old block	mgowomanon	day day

Hey, sports fans. . .

be sure to look

in August



UNDER THE BLEACHERS!!

A RESPONSE TO A READER'S POINT OF VIEW

Having read the June issue of Open Arms, I hope that the woman who felt compelled to write has gotten that urge out of her system and will no longer soil the pages of this paper again. A part of me feels sorry for you, a woman who finds herself bored in a woman's community. However, that part of me is extremely small, due to the other opinions you voiced. Who the h--- are you to tell us that we "have to realize that there are other people in the world"????? What do you think this community and this paper are for? If I want financial news, I pick up the Wall Street Journal; if I want local news, I pick up the Tribune; but if I want information about the Lesbian community, I pick up the Open Arms. It is simple to find out what other communities are doing - every one of them has a newsletter. But I expect the Open Arms to deal with my community.

In regards to the support group, why don't the people who want to attend a mixed group attend the gay/lesbian affairs, and leave the Lesbian support group alone? Do Pro Choice people invite Right to Lifers to their meetings? Do Democrats invite Republicans? Do Radicals invite Conservatives? NO! The whole idea is to find a group that one is comfortable with, and I do not think I am alone when I say that I am not comfortable in a group with boys, gay or otherwise.

I also take issue with your statement "All human beings from the same race". Are you possibly guilty of the same faults that you accuse us of having? Or haven't you begun to deal with your racism yet? Remember your own words -- "there are other people in the world".

As far as I am concerned, you can go have your great time being treated regally by the queens. It keeps the air cleaner at the events I choose to attend.

Linda

P.S. I don't hesitate to sign my name to this article. However, if I had written the crap that you did, I probably would be too embarrassed to sign it, too.

LESBIAN MOMS/KIDS

These newsletters for lesbian moms/kids are available. Write for more information.

Our Parents Aren't Straight
OPAS

c/o Donna Ippolito
7710 Hollybrook Lane
Indianapolis, IN 46227

Kid's Newsletter
Justus
P.O. Box 831
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Lesbian mom's newsletter
\$15/year
LMRN
P.O. Box 21567
Seattle, WA 98111



6/5/91

Dear Sisters,

I am writing this letter not only to say hello to you from Maine, but to express my thoughts concerning the recent desire of some Michiana Womyn to include men in Open Arms support group. Although I now live 1200 miles away, my heart is leading me to write this letter.

I strongly urge all of you to keep all Open Arms events FOR WOMYN ONLY. Gay men are still men and address very different issues. Lesbian support group is just that - a group for lesbians. Few womyn have the opportunity to attend lesbian only events. It greatly saddens me that this might be taken away from the womyn in your area. If womyn have a desire to attend lesbian and gay events, there are groups such as Notre Dame/St. Mary's that offer co-ed events.

I was saddened by the anger expressed by the womyn who wrote "A Reader's Point of View," in the June Open Arms issue. How could Michiana womyn be "bored silly" with only each other's company? Lesbians are womyn of diverse qualities! I find boredom around gay men NOT lesbians! We have so much to learn from our lesbian sisters!

The writer also stated "womyn must realize there are other people in this world besides lesbians, for example gay men." I agree that gay men are a part of your community, but so are straight men. Men are men. As a radical, feminist lesbian who saw the lesbian community in Michiana grow, I will be saddened to see it go backwards. I believe with all my heart that including gay men in events would cause this to happen.

Now that I live in Maine where lesbians are quite isolated, I realize how lucky Michiana lesbians are to have Open Arms, events, concerts, and a lesbian support group. My thanks as past editor of Open Arms to Maggie, Jeanne and all the other womyn who, through their HARD work, have kept the dream of lesbian community alive. I miss you all very much!

Bobbie Miller
HCR 72 3 Golden Lane
North Waterboro, ME 04061

OPEN ARMS STAFF MEMBERS:

Laura (616) 663-8248
 Jeanne (219) 287-5071
 Maggie (219) 287-3124

EVENTS COORDINATORS:

Potlucks: Nancy O. (219) 233-3481
 Saturday Brunch: Nancy N. (616) 663-8248
 3rd Friday Out: Lu & Sheree (616) 663-8644
 Womyn's Video Night: Gloria & Julie
 (616) 684-4011



GAY & LESBIAN AA GROUPS:

Sundays - Elkhart Memorial Hospital
 Renaissance Unit
 2nd Floor
 7:00 p.m. Ind. time

Mondays - First Unitarian Church
 101 E. Northshore
 South Bend
 7:00 p.m. Ind. time
 (1st meeting of the month
 is an open meeting)

Saturdays - First Unitarian Church
 101 E. Northshore
 South Bend
 8:00 p.m. Ind. time

SUBSCRIPTION FOR OPEN ARMS -- \$10.00 per year

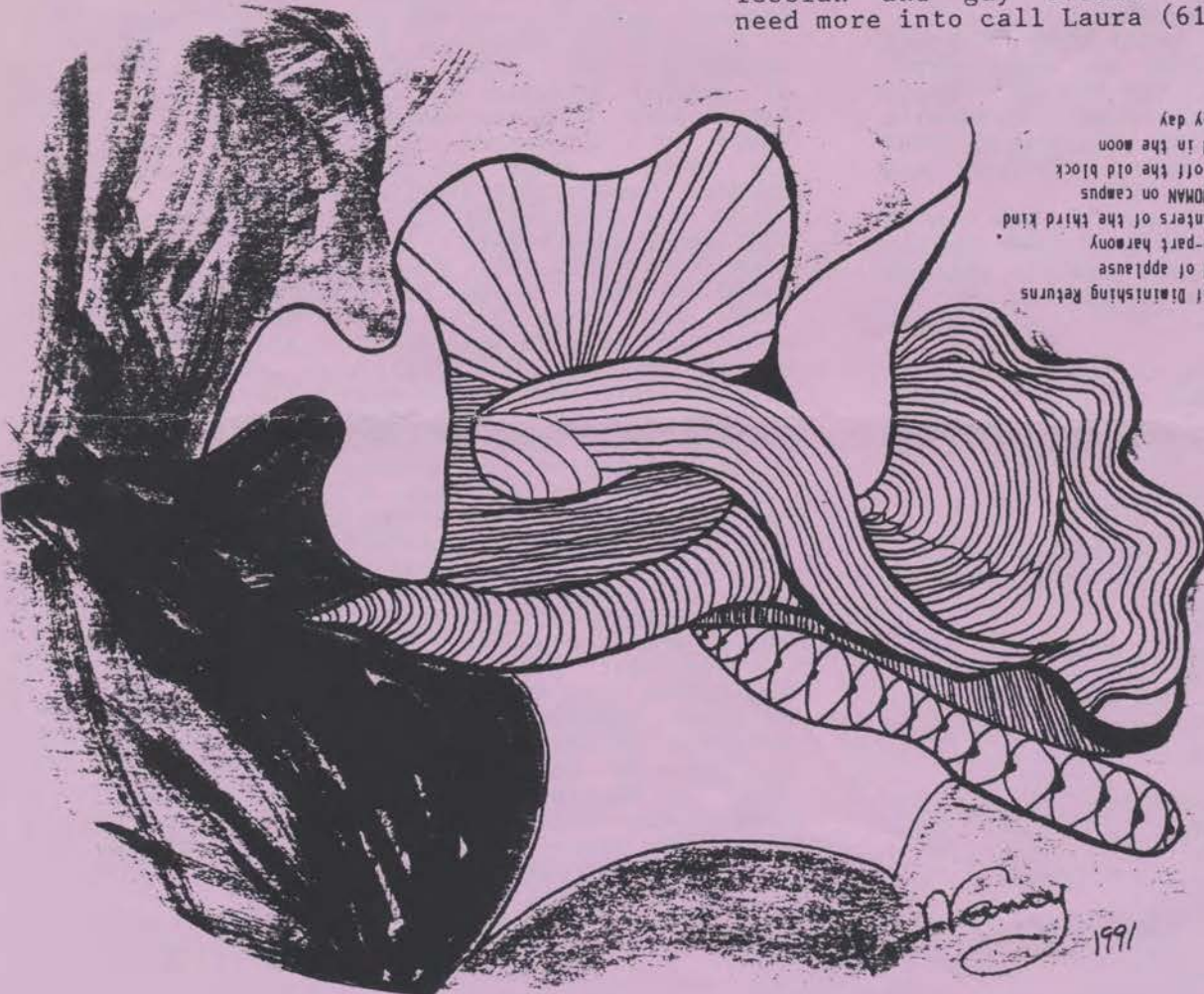
Name _____ Birthday _____
 Address _____ Anniversary _____
 City _____
 Zip Code _____

Make check payable to Open Arms

Mail to: P.O. Box 845
 Mishawaka, IN 46546

CEDAR POINT TRIP

Anyone interested in some summer fun?
 We are trying to form a group of people to
 get a special rate for a Cedar Point trip
 during the month of August. This will be a
 lesbian and gay event. If interested or
 need more info call Laura (616) 663-8248.



2e Lav of Diminishing Returns
 2f round of applause
 3a three-part harmony
 3b encounters of the third kind
 3c big WOMAN on campus
 3d chip off the old block
 3e WOMAN in the moon
 3f day by day

Answers to Box Phrases
 1c arch enemy
 1d Captain Hook
 1e "Good afternoon"
 1f topless bathing suit
 2a age before beauty
 2b different strokes
 2c yearly check-up
 2d "Open, Sesame"